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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: CONTINUING CROATIAN CONCERNS ABOUT SLOVENIA'S  
RATIFICATION OF NATO PROTOCOLS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a February 12 phone conversation with the Ambassador, Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs State Secretary Bozinovic expressed the continuing concern of senior Croatian officials about Slovene ratification of the NATO accession protocol for Croatia. Noting that he was calling at the request of Minister Jandrokovic, Bozinovic drew the Ambassador's attention to a statement by Slovene opposition leader Janez Jansa, reported in the Croatian daily Novi List. Reportedly Jansa, commenting on the possible referendum on the Croatian protocol, stated that a year's delay in Croatian membership "would not have dramatic consequences for NATO." Further, Jansa is quoted as saying that: "The EU did not fall apart when the Irish voted against the Lisbon Treaty, and neither will NATO because of a Slovene referendum, just as nothing special happened when Greece stopped Macedonia last year."

¶2. (C) Bozinovic went on to express concern that, despite the favorable vote in the Slovene parliament last week, delaying actions by the Slovene State Council or the initiation of a referendum campaign could push Slovene ratification past the deadline of the April 3-4 NATO Summit. Bozinovic asked for continuing U.S. engagement with Slovenia to avoid actions that would cause such a delay and prevent Croatia from being a full member of NATO at the Summit. The Ambassador assured Bozinovic that this issue was being followed closely by Embassy Ljubljana and Washington, and the U.S. would do what it could to be helpful.

¶3. (C) Comment. As we have reported previously, the anxiety level here is very high, and has not been significantly reduced by the Slovene vote last week. While agreeing that neither Prime Minister Pahor nor Jansa want a referendum, the Croatians are suspicious that both Pahor and Jansa would be happy to see the process of considering a referendum delay ratification beyond the April Summit, thereby depriving the Croatians of a seat at the table as a full member. Successful completion of the NATO ratification process and full membership at the April Summit has taken on even greater importance here as the EU accession process has stalled and the government deals with a deteriorating economic situation. Viewing the U.S. as the principal advocates for enlargement and the earliest proponent of NATO membership for Croatia, the Croatians are clearly looking to us to help.

BRADTKE